

### **1. December 2004-January 2005 DSS Newsletter Available**

The Decision Support Office has issued *DSS Matters* for December 2004-January 2005. The newsletter includes notice that the DSS Monthly Program Cost Report (MPCR) has officially replaced the Cost Distribution Report (CDR). Both were run in FY2004, but beginning January 1, 2005, only the MPCR will be created. For details on this and other items, see the newsletter link at [http://vaww.dss.med.va.gov/news/ne\\_newsletter.asp](http://vaww.dss.med.va.gov/news/ne_newsletter.asp).

### **2. Implementation of RAI/MDS in Specified SCI Units**

On January 6, 2005, the Office of Patient Care Services issued an Information Letter (IL 11-2005-001) entitled "Implementation of the RAI/MDS on LTC-SCI Units." It reported that Resident Assessment Instrument/Minimum Data Set (RAI/MDS) data collection is underway in two of the four VA Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) units that are surveyed under Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) Long-Term Care (LTC) standards. That is, SCI-LTC units in VISNs 1 and 12 are submitting RAI/MDS data, and the units in VISNs 3 and 6 will begin submitting RAI/MDS assessments pending completion of staff training. See the full text of the letter at [http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=1211](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1211).

### **3. Means Test Thresholds for Calendar Year 2005**

VHA Directive 2004-071, dated December 17, 2004, revises the Means Test Thresholds, Medicare Deductible Rate, and Child Income Exclusions for calendar year 2005. As the directive states, "Below the Means Test Threshold" is defined as those veterans whose attributable income and net worth are such that they are unable to defray the expenses of care and therefore are not subject to copayment charges for hospital and outpatient medical services." For full details, see [http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=1207](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1207).

### **4. QUERI Paper in Journal of American Medical Informatics Association**

The special series of papers on informatics in the QUERI process, coordinated by VIREC as part of its funded consultation with QUERI, has concluded with publication of:

Lyons, S, Tripp-Reimer, T, et al., "Information Technology for Clinical Guideline Implementation: Perceptions of Multidisciplinary Stakeholders" *J Am Med Inform Assoc* 2005; 12: 64-71. Epub 2004 Oct 18.

This paper is available online at <http://www.jamia.org/cgi/content/full/12/1/64>. Six earlier papers in the series are available at <http://www.jamia.org/content/vol11/issue5/>.

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